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# Year's Lag Seen in SALT Monitoring

## ADMINISTRATION ADMITS PROBLEM TO COUNTER LEAKS

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The Carter administration has acknowledged that it cannot adequately monitor Soviet compliance with the emerging SALT II agreement, nor will it be likely to inside of a year's time.

It was a damaging admission for the administration to make, but its purpose was clear: to counteract an even more disastrous impression created by leaks on this so-called verification issue.

The ability of the United States to monitor developments in Soviet strategic weapons involves some of the nation's most sensitive secrets. That ability also is the key to Senate ratification of the SALT II treaty, the final details of which are being negotiated.

Criticism of the treaty has focused on verification, particularly since the loss of two CIA electronic eavesdropping stations in Iran that had ringside locations for Soviet missile tests.

Yesterday the administration struck back at critics with the most detailed statement yet on verification. The chosen spokesman was Defense Secretary Harold Brown, the official believed to be the government's most-credible high-ranking witness on SALT.

BROWN'S POINT was simple. The United States will not be able to verify the treaty for a year, but that still won't give the Russians time for any meaningful cheating, which takes much longer.

The specific episode that prompted the statement was a leak of testimony by CIA Director Stansfield Turner before the Senate Intelligence Commit-

tee. Turner, according to accounts of his testimony, said it would be 1984 before the intelligence gathered by the stations in Iran could be matched by other means. That is only one year before SALT II runs out.

Brown's official statement did not really challenge that. What it did say was that the stations gathered much intelligence, not all of it related to SALT verification. Thus, sufficient monitoring ability to verify SALT could be regained in a year even though the full capacity for strategic intelligence gathering would not be restored.

The administration also hinted that it was ready for a more aggressive approach to SALT critics in the Senate if leaks continued.

ONE HIGH OFFICIAL said yesterday that leaks of Turner's testimony "raise serious questions about how we can inform the Senate about these issues if members are not going to observe the ground rules and let out this information in a distorted fashion."

Another administration official who also declined to be identified said a greater effort would have to be made for a comprehensive presentation of the verification issue despite the classification difficulties.

Sources close to the SALT negotiations say that two of the most contentious of the final issues under discussion have been settled. One involves the definition of the one new type of missile to be permitted under SALT and the other involves the understanding between the United States and the Soviet Union limiting Soviet scrambling of data from its missile tests.

One point of contention remains, said one source, who described it as "an underbrush issue." This concerns the lingering doubts left by a provocative Soviet missile test conducted in December of last year.

IN THAT TEST of the mammoth Soviet SS-18 rocket, certain maneuvers led Western analysts to believe that it could have been a dry run for use of more than 10 warheads on a rocket.

That would be a violation of SALT II were the treaty in force. It came at a time when verification of such treaty limits were beginning to occupy a central position in the U.S. debate over SALT.

"We need to be 100 percent certain on this," said one U.S. official. The administration counts the 10-warhead limit on Soviet land-based missiles as one of its chief SALT achievements.

Secretary of State Cyrus Vance returns to Washington tonight after a brief vacation. It is anticipated that he will meet with Soviet Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin again before final agreement is reached.

That would leave only the announcement of a date and location for a summit meeting to sign the treaty. That could come late next month.

Yesterday's sharp response by the administration was aimed beyond the summit at the treaty ratification fight in the Senate, which looks increasingly difficult.

IN HIS STATEMENT, the secretary of Defense said the principle information at issue in the verification controversy concerns the nature of characteristics of new or modified Soviet intercontinental ballistic missiles.

"Each Soviet program will require about 20 flight tests over a period of years," Brown said.

"Through existing monitoring systems, or replacements for the Iranian sites, we could well miss some flights and might miss some data. . . . Our assessment of compliance would be made from information we would collect over the whole test program for each missile, for a variety of monitoring systems," the secretary said.

"We expect to conclude a treaty that resolves satisfactorily the remaining provisions on verification and on new ICBMs," he said. "In that event it is my judgment that our monitoring will be such as to provide adequate verification as to Soviet compliance with the curbs on new or modified ICBMs."

**BROWN SAID** that full intelligence capability — that is, the equivalent of what was available before the Iranian stations were closed — could be restored by 1983 or 1984.

"Regaining enough of it to verify adequately Soviet compliance with the provisions of SALT II, I estimate, will take about a year . . . depending on how fast we can carry out monitoring programs under development," he said.